



Somerville Public Schools

Education • Inspiration • Excellence

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Dear Families and Staff:

It has been wonderful to have students and staff back in our school buildings, interacting with one another face to face after a year of remote teaching and learning. Students and staff are continuing to settle into their new routines. We were excited to welcome Brown School students and staff back to their home school on Monday, and are finalizing plans for the return of Somerville High School students to in-person learning. We are also preparing to move SKIP and Life Skills K-8 students and teachers back to the Kennedy School starting next week.

Our COVID-19 testing protocol has been going very well, with a district percent positivity rate of well under 1%. We appreciate everyone's efforts and cooperation with this critical piece of our safety plan. Additional COVID-related data is available on our [SPS COVID Dashboard](#). **We also want to remind everyone how important it is to continue to follow COVID safety protocols after hours to minimize the risk of students or staff having to quarantine as a close contact of someone who may test positive.** We are increasingly seeing students not following protocols after school hours, resulting in students being identified as close contacts and having to temporarily transition back to remote.

SKIP and Life Skills K-8

Students in our SKIP and Life Skills K-8 programs were dismissed at 11:30am today so that teachers could pack for the move back to their home school starting next week. Materials will be moved from Somerville High School to the Kennedy School on Saturday. Teachers will set up their Kennedy classrooms on Monday morning in preparation for their students' return at 11:30 that morning.

Somerville High School

Approximately 300 Somerville High School (SHS) students already attend school in-person, including many students in our highest-needs programs and in our Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. Remaining grade 9-11 SHS students who indicated in the recent SHS survey that they prefer to return to in-person learning, will do so starting Friday, May 14. Due to building space issues, students in grade 12 -- with the exception of CTE seniors and students in special education programs -- will remain remote for their final week of school, May 17-21, pending a waiver from DESE. We are excited to have SHS students returning and will be utilizing space at the new Somerville High School building as well as the modular classrooms for our SHS students for the remainder of the school year. SHS parents and guardians should have received an update from Principal LaGambina with details on the transition plan.

Class of 2021 Graduations

Somerville High School: We are thrilled to have received approval to host the Somerville High School Class of 2021 graduation ceremony at Dilboy Stadium, with attendance limitations and other COVID safety measures in place. The SHS graduation is scheduled for Monday, June 7. Attendance will be limited to 2 family members per graduate, and the event will also be live-streamed. SHS families will receive additional information in the next couple of weeks as details continue to be finalized.

Full Circle: We are exploring indoor and outdoor options for the Full Circle Class of 2021 graduation ceremony. Full Circle families will receive additional details about graduation as they are finalized.

SCALE: Class of 2021 graduates from the Somerville Center for Adult Learning Experiences (SCALE) will be recognized at a virtual graduation ceremony scheduled for 6:30pm on Thursday, June 3. SCALE graduates will receive additional details about graduation as plans are finalized.

Upcoming School Committee Meeting

The next Somerville School Committee Meeting takes place Monday, May 10, starting at 7:00 p.m. Families and staff are invited to join for a continuation of a presentation on Advancing Equity and Anti-Racism in our District, focusing on our restorative justice practices and future anticipated work. At a Special School Committee Meeting of the Whole this past Monday, we provided an update on our equity efforts with a focus on some of the work of School-Based Equity Specialists and the Advancing Equity Task Force, an update on School Committee and District legal requirements and responsibilities, and information on the District/Somerville Police Department Memorandum of Understanding. The [slide deck](#) and a [video link](#) of Monday's Special School Committee meeting are available for viewing at your convenience. The full meeting agenda and a Zoom link to the upcoming Monday night School Committee meeting are available [here](#).

School Committee Office Hours

Somerville School Committee members are hosting in-person and virtual office hours. Members of the community are invited to join them and share your questions, concerns, and comments. Visit www.somerville.k12.ma.us/SC-Spring2021OfficeHours for office hour dates, times, locations, and links.

Summer Programming

We are excited to welcome Heather McCormack as the new SPS Out-of-School-Time (OST) Director, who will coordinate and help support our many OST efforts including summer school programming. Heather will be reaching out in the next week or two with a survey to better understand summer programming needs and interests of our community. Visit www.somerville.k12.ma.us/summer for Summer 2021 programming information. The site will continue to be updated as additional programs and details are finalized.

COVID-19 Vaccination Update

COVID-19 vaccines are now available for anyone 16 years or older. Visit www.somervillema.gov/covidvaccine for details on how to sign up and information about Walk-in Vaccine Clinics as they become available.

Respectfully,

Mary Skipper, Superintendent of Schools